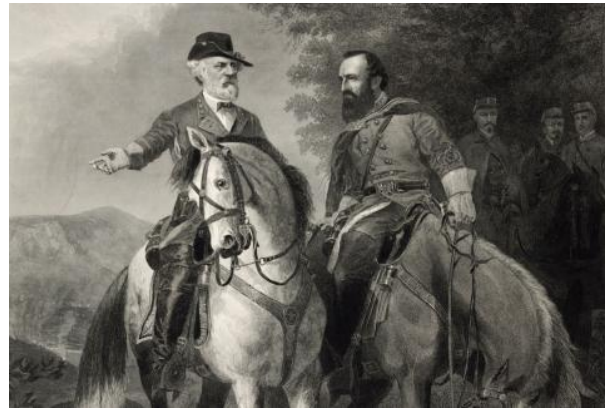




0. WINNING STRATEGY - Story Preface

1. BULL RUN

2. THOMAS JONATHON ("STONEWALL") JACKSON

3. MISTAKES AT FREDERICKSBURG

4. FREDERICKSBURG: DEATH AND MERCY

5. TENDER-HEARTED WARRIOR

6. WINNING STRATEGY

7. VICTORY AT CHANCELLORSVILLE

8. THE AGONY OF DEFEAT

9. JACKSON IS SHOT

10. THE DEATH OF STONEWALL JACKSON

11. SANDIE PENDELTON

12. OTHER KEY FIGURES

George Francis Robert Henderson, who knew Thomas (Stonewall) Jackson, used these words to describe him: "His nature was essentially aggressive. He was never more to be feared than when he was retreating, and where others thought only of strong defensive positions he looked persistently for the opportunity to attack." Those words could be used to describe Jackson's actions at Chancellorsville.

Everett B. D. Julio painted this scene of the Civil War generals and their horses, often referred to as "The Last Meeting." The illustration—created in 1869—depicts their meeting on the 1st of May, not long before Jackson's injury. [Image online](#) via the United States Army War College. Click on it for a full-page view.

At a [crossroads mansion](#) named Chancellorsville, in a dense forest locals called "The Wilderness," Union General [Joseph Hooker](#) had assembled about 70,000 of his infantry. They were nine miles from the Virginia town of Fredericksburg on the 30th of April, 1863.

Absolutely confident that he had Lee and the Confederates in a vice grip, Hooker [told](#) his men:

It is with heartfelt satisfaction the commanding general announces to the army that the operations of the last three days have determined that our enemy must either ingloriously fly or come out from behind his defenses and give us battle on our own ground, where certain destruction awaits him.

General Hooker's boast was premature.

[Robert E. Lee](#) and Stonewall Jackson would not "ingloriously fly" from a potential battle. But they would, in a daring maneuver, give Hooker a [fight on his own ground](#). It would not happen, however, the way [the Union commander](#) expected.

Lee knew he was outnumbered. His scouts had reported a serious situation—except for one potential bright spot. "[Jeb](#)" [Stuart](#)" reported that three miles west of Chancellorsville, Hooker's right flank was "in the air."

These blue coats were not dug in and would not expect an attack. To successfully surprise them, Lee would have to split his already outnumbered force into three units. If any one of those units were attacked, the results would be catastrophic.

Lee took the gamble. He gave authority for the battle [to Jackson](#).

Stonewall led the Second Corps—about 30,000 infantry and artillery—on a roundabout march. Screened by Stuart's cavalry and guided by a local resident along a little-known path leading to an iron-smelting furnace, Jackson's plan was to surprise the vulnerable right flank of Hooker's army, the 11th Corps commanded by [Oliver Otis Howard](#).

Observing absolute quiet and secrecy, the Confederates would not attack until about 5 p.m. on May 2nd.

Arriving undetected at his destination and surrounded by his former [Virginia Military Institute](#) colleagues and students, [General Jackson commenced the battle](#) with his now-famous words:

The Institute will be heard from today.

In one of the most daringly conceived and brilliantly executed operations in American military history, Jackson

and his men crushed Hooker's right flank.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/WINNING-STRATEGY-Gods-and-Generals>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/WINNING-STRATEGY-Gods-and-Generals>

Media Stream



Joseph Hooker - Photo

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

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View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Joseph-Hooker-Photo>

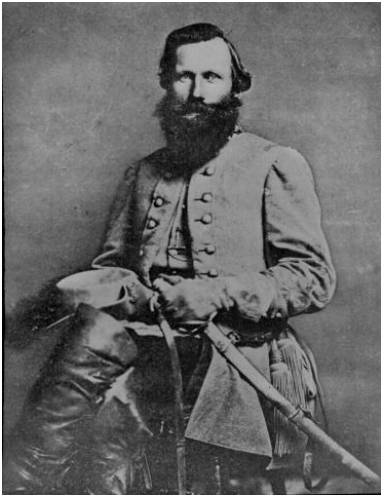


Robert E. Lee Photo

By Minnis and Cowell. Courtesy of Virginia Military Institute.

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View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Robert-E.-Lee-Photo>



"JEB" Stuart - Confederate Cavalry Officer

Courtesy, U.S. National Archives, image 64-M-9.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/-JEB-Stuart-Confederate-Cavalry-Officer>



Battle of Chancellorsville - Stonewall Jackson

Clip from *Gods and Generals*, depicting Stonewall Jackson and the start of the battle for Chancellorsville. Copyright, Warner Bros., all rights reserved. Clip provided here, as fair use, for educational purposes and to acquaint new viewers with the film.

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